

Hello! My name is Anna Beck. I am a freshman from Crescent Valley high school. Today I will be discussing my perspective on how health and wellness impacts a student's ability to thrive in their school environment.

I've been very privileged to have had teachers and programs who have supported me through middle school and high school.

One teacher that has given me the most important lessons not only for school but for life, has been Isley Dumble. She was my PE/health teacher and the head advisor for Cheldelin Middle Schools equity club. Without her I wouldn't have the confidence to stand up for equity and be a part of school leadership. She helped me become more socially aware and that translates to all aspects of life - mental health. Having a teacher I could trust and talk to made school tolerable when I was going through challenges. She really did help me make it through 8th grade.

“What does this have to do with health and wellness?”

With the right support, whether that's teachers, or counselors, and access to programs; your kids, and my peers could find the courage and motivation to succeed in school.

I knew that mental health was a pressing issue but I never really experienced it until seventh grade when many of my friends were dealing with severe anxiety or depression. It gave me a whole new outlook to see those I love struggling.

Later I had to come to terms that I was struggling too. They never talk about how lonely it is not being able to open up about what was going on internally, but with the help of some trusted adults at school I was able to have a conversation with my parents.

I never thought that having an open dialogue about mental health and overall emotional health would have such an impact on me.

Wellness and mental health should be a critical concern for all, but my generation especially is feeling the pressure. We are the ones starting the raw, some might say

uncomfortable conversation that wouldn't be appropriate 20 years ago. But it can't just be us.

Like all generations, we feel the burdens of older generations, their issues that they didn't get around to solving are placed upon us. We feel helpless, especially since we are surrounded by the media, we can't seem to escape the problems of our world. That is why anxiety and depression appear more prevalent than years past.

My message for you here with me is that the small things really do matter. Your donations help fund so many programs for teachers and students. I'm going to be real, not all students in the district will notice, But do you know who will notice? The kids truly struggling to find their path in life. Thankfully this foundation isn't just catering to the teens who have their lives put together, but catering to the teens trying to pick up the pieces of their lives. And obviously this foundation strives to help all students, but more so these kids.

This is why I ask all of you to think about how you can expand the conversation about the deeper issues affecting my peers. Students can't be stuck in classrooms reading about mental health from textbooks, or out of touch teachers reading statistics we need real people who can relate.

We all need to take responsibility for ignoring the hard conversation and educate ourselves to help the younger generations.

The Corvallis public schools foundation changes lives whether people realize it or not, you do so much for our Community. This is important, this is more than just about money, this about **the future**. Thank you all for listening.

-- Anna Beck, 9th grade, Crescent Valley High School